

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-2, 4-12, 14-17, and 19 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 1, 4-8, 10-12, and 15-17 are amended. No new matter is added. Support for the claims can be found throughout the specification, including the original claims, and the drawings. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejected claims 1-2, 4-6, 8, and 9 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Katagiri, U.S. Patent No. 5,598,607 in view of Peterson, U.S. Patent No. 4,437,784. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to recite, *inter alia*, wherein one of the plurality of pivotal plates is provided on one side of the frictional member and another of the plurality of pivotal plates is provided on the other side of the frictional member. Katagiri and Peterson, taken alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest such features, or the claimed combination of independent claim 1.

That is, Katagiri does not disclose or suggest such features. Peterson fails to overcome the deficiencies of Katagiri, as it is merely cited for allegedly teaching a plate shaped spacer.

Accordingly, the rejection of independent claim 1 over Katagiri and Peterson should be withdrawn. Dependent claims 2, 4-6, and 8-9 are allowable over Katagiri and Peterson at least for the reasons discussed above with respect to independent claim 1, from which they depend, as well as for their added features.

The Office Action rejected claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Katagiri in view of Peterson, and further in view of Lu, U.S. Patent No. 6,018,847. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Dependent claim 7 is allowable over Katagiri and Peterson at least for the reasons discussed above with respect to independent claim 1, from which it depends, as well as for its added features. Lu fails to overcome the deficiencies of Katagiri and Overhues, as it is merely cited as allegedly teaching a guiding protuberance or guiding portion. Accordingly, the rejection of claim 7 over Katagiri, Peterson, and Lu should be withdrawn.

The Office Action rejected claims 10-12, 14-17, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Katagiri, Peterson, and Lu. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 10 and 15 have been amended to recite, *inter alia*, wherein one of the plurality of cylindrical spacers is provided on one side of the frictional member and another of the plurality of cylindrical spacers is provided on the other side of the frictional member. Katagiri, Peterson, and Lu, taken alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest such features, or the respective claimed combinations of independent claims 10 and 15.

That is, Katagiri does not disclose or suggest such features. Peterson fails to overcome the deficiencies of Katagiri, as it is merely cited for allegedly teaching a plate shaped spacer. Further, Lu fails to overcome the deficiencies of Katagiri and Peterson, as it is merely cited for allegedly teaching a hinge arrangement that limits range of motion of the hinge.

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Accordingly, the rejection of independent claim 10 and 15 over Katagiri, Peterson, and Lu should be withdrawn. Dependent claims 11-12, 14, 16-17, and 19 are allowable over Katagiri, Peterson, and Lu at least for the reasons discussed above with respect to independent claims 10 and 15, from which they respectively depend, as well as for their added features.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

If the Examiner believes that any additional changes would place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

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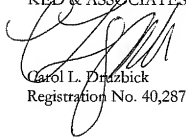
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To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 16-0607 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
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